

The Hidden Baconian Acrostics and Anagrams in the Shakespeare First Folio

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And it is surely better to know what one needs to know, and yet to think one does not know everything, than to think one knows everything and yet know nothing of what is needed to be known.

[Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1620); Peter Urbach and John Gibson, eds., *Novum Organum With Other Parts of The Great Instauration* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1994), p. 117]

In recent times a very substantial body of academic literature has been produced by critics and commentators surrounding the subject of Shakespeare and anagrams.¹ In the words of Professor Fowler in his own influential *Literary Names Personal Names in English Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2012) ‘Shakespeare’s many anagrams in the *Sonnets* (1609) were lost from view for centuries until R. H. Winnick’s closely argued article (in 2009) startled the scholarly world’ wherein he revealed ‘embedded letter anagrams on WRIOTHESLEY’.² Winnick in turn acknowledges the work of Helen Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (Harvard University Press, 1997) which proved key to establishing that ‘the Sonnets contain numerous instances of anagrammatic wit’ of which Winnick provides several examples.³ As Professor Vendler observes ‘there is always something cryptographic in Shakespeare’s sonnet-surfaces-sometimes literally so, as in the anagrams of 7, or as in the play on *vile* and *evil* in 121, but more often merely an oddness that catches the eye and begs explanation.’⁴ Dr Winnick comments that a ‘close inspection’ of the sonnets ‘orthographic patterns suggests ...there may be a previously unrecognised nexus binding’ their ‘onomastic [the study relating to names or nomenclatures-the devising or choosing the names for things] and anagrammatic wit.’⁵ He then proceeds to set out the central premise of his long and detailed article. There are, Dr Winnick states, more than a dozen sonnets ‘those addressed to, or about, the unnamed, narcissistic, androgynously beautiful Fair Friend’ that ‘contain short, semantically discrete phrases, most not more than a dozen or so characters long, in which occur the letters needed to form the name Wriothesley with few or none missing or left over.’⁶

The examination and very close scrutiny of the sonnets by Dr Winnick produced a series of remarkable discoveries which cumulatively taken together appears to put his findings beyond all reasonable doubt. For example, the phrase ‘Be where you list’ in Sonnet 58 contains the letters to form ‘Be U Wriothesley’.⁷ Twelve of the first thirteen letters in the phrase from the tenth line of Sonnet 39 ‘thy soure leisure’ (‘including its two *u*’s combined to form *w*, a common and permissible anagrammatic substitution’) can be transposed to make the name Wriothesley.⁸ Two of the Shakespeare sonnets each contain all twenty-two letters needed to form the name Wriothesley twice. The fourth line of Sonnet 126 ‘Thy louers withering, as thy sweet selfe grow’st’ has all the letters needed to twice form Wriothesley. The couplet in the special Sonnet 55 ‘So til the iudgement that your selfe arise,/You liue in this, and dwell in louers eies’ again contains within it two anagrams of Wriothesley. The fourth line of Sonnet 17 ‘Which hides your life, and shewes not halfe your parts’ is a near anagram of Wriothesley twice over. As Dr Winnick explains the phrase ‘Which hides your life’ contains ten of the eleven letters needed for Wriothesley ‘along with a nearby *t*, to form one of the line’s two Wriothesleys. In the Conclusion, the highlighted letters in “**shewes not halfe your parts**” comprise ten of the eleven needed, along with a nearby *i*, to form the other.’⁹ An allusion to this cryptographic device is found in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in the passage where Julia entreats the wind be calm so as to ‘blow not a word away/Till I have found each letter in the letter’ before saying ‘Loe, here in one line is his name twice writ’ (1:2:124).¹⁰ Less rare, writes Dr Winnick, ‘but no less telling than the double-Wriothesley lines in sonnets 17 and 126 are the dozen or so instances in which most or all of the letters needed to form Wriothesley’s name

once occur within short, thematically relevant, intralinear phrases'.¹¹ There is another curious example which seems to have escaped Dr Winnick's notice. In the fifth line of Sonnet 14 we read:

Nor can I fortune to **brief** minutes tell

which yields the anagram **I F BACON**.

If we then turn to lines 9 and 10 of the same sonnet:

But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art

it also yields the anagram **F BACON**.

It should likewise be recalled writes Dr Winnick that 'Shakespeare built a key scene' in *Twelfth Night* 'on name based anagrammatic wit' using the letters 'M.O.A.I.', a 'truncated anagram' of the name, Malvolia.¹²

In 'All's I-L-L That Starts "I'Le": Acrostic Space and Ludic Reading in the Margins of the Early Modern Play-Text' Professor Sofer itemizes the various acrostic methods in usage prior to and during the Elizabethan era:

By the late sixteenth century, acrostic conventions allowed for vertical, lateral, and/or diagonal movement. Standard varieties included the *initial acrostic* (the first letters of successive verse lines); the *mesostich* (the first letters after caesuras); the *telestich* (the last letters of successive lines); and the *double acrostic* (first and last letters of successive verse lines). As the mesostich and double acrostic demonstrate, acrostics need not conscript adjacent letters; they can be dilated (or "dispersed") through a given text. So we can usefully distinguish two acrostic modes: *nondilated* (we follow sequential letters, in whatever direction, without skipping) and *dilated* (we skip over nonsalient letters-for example, in a double acrostic, all letters that neither begin nor end a line-in order to pick out salient ones).¹³

He points out that Jonson [who was living with Bacon at Gorhambury assisting him with the translations of his *Essays* while the Shakespeare First Folio was working its way through the Jaggard printing press] in his prefaces to *Volpone* and *The Alchemist* employed acrostic verse poems that summarize the plots. In addition to this Professor Sofer provides 'a short list' of sixteenth and seventeenth-century poets who employed acrostic devices: Thomas Wyatt, Thomas Watson, John Salusbury, Edmund Spenser, Josua Sylvester, John Donne, John Cleveland, George Herbert [who also assisted Bacon with his translation of *De Augmentis* while the First Folio was passing through the Jaggard printing press] and John Milton [author of a mysterious verse printed in the Shakespeare Second Folio].¹⁴ Yet despite offering up the examples of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* and Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* Professor Sofer mistakenly imagines 'Shakespeare seems to have been relatively immune to the current craze for acrostics, if that is what it was.'¹⁵ Nevertheless, several acrostics noted by other scholars in *Titus Andronicus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and various sonnets, are presented before his readers yet 'These felicitous patterns hardly bear the stamp of authorship' and 'on balance, the paucity of acrostic patterning in the margins of the Sonnets argues for Shakespeare's relative lack of interest in them.'¹⁶ He then goes on to say 'the most well-known Shakespeare acrostics hitherto discovered appear not in the *Sonnets* but in *The Comedy of Errors* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', the last one first identified by the Baconian William Stone Booth,

¹⁷ who discerned a substantial number of acrostic-anagrams revealing and confirming Bacon's authorship of the Shakespeare poems and plays, which Professor Sofer chose not to present before his learned readers.

The impact of R. H. Winnick's 2009 article on anagrams and Shakespeare's sonnets that had apparently so startled the scholarly world was far exceeded a few years later when William Bellamy set forth his ground-breaking work *Shakespeare's Verbal Art* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015). The important study reveals and explores the anagrammatic devices that lie beneath the surface of all Shakespearean texts and how these sub-textual devices help to clarify authorial intention and meaning. As exemplar texts he focuses especially on the sonnets and the plays *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Twelfth Night* all of which are written and constructed around various concealed anagrams and other related linguistic and cryptic devices:

This is a book about Shakespeare's virtuosity in the art of anagram...it aims to show how Shakespeare, the greatest poet of his age, may prove also the greatest anagrammatist.

....As will become clear in later chapters, a conventionally "sub-textual" anagrammatism is not only pervasive in Shakespeare's verse, but is fundamental to his verbal art.¹⁸

Consequently, of the previously unidentified textually embedded anagrams in the Shakespeare poems and plays:

modern readings of Shakespeare's texts have necessarily been superficial ("of the surface"), and often wholly inadequate. This is because what Shakespeare appears to be saying in the overt dimension of his text may be amplified, modified, or radically subverted by anagrammatic utterance in the covert dimension. The revelatory anagrams in the covert dimension of the text must be read in counterpoint to, and in combination with the overt dimension.¹⁹

In *Literary Names Personal Names in English Literature* under the heading 'Embedded anagrams' Professor Fowler points out 'the practice of embedding names received renewed stimulus from the seminal example of Petrarch's *Canzoniere*'.²⁰ A work known to Bacon (his mother Lady Bacon was an Italian scholar/translator) whose poetry had a direct effect on his Shakespeare Sonnets. The Italian poet established the practice of embedding anagrams in sonnets, a device taken up by the French poet Joachim du Bellay, a founder of the Pleiades, the group of poets Bacon was in touch with at the French court during his time France in the train of the English ambassador Sir Amias Paulet. In Elizabethan England writes Professor Fowler 'four influential poets practiced embedding of name anagrams' three of whom were 'Sidney, Spenser [and] Shakespeare'.²¹ He produces several examples of embedded name anagrams identified by Dr Winnick in the Shakespeare Sonnets before concluding:

Shakespeare, the greatest poet of his age, may prove also the greatest anagrammatist.²²

He was undoubtedly the greatest poet and dramatist of his age, or of any age, and he was also its greatest literary cryptographer inserting hidden acrostics and anagrams in the Shakespeare First Folio repeatedly revealing and confirming his authorship of the greatest literature in the history of the world.

In the First Folio in *The Life and Death of King John*, Bacon explores the law of bastardy, in particular royal bastardy, through the most important and largest role in the play, the royal bastard Sir Philip Faulconbridge. The first eight letters of the surname **Faulconbridge** conceals within it an anagram of **F BACON**. In a scene with the royal bastard Sir Philip Faulconbridge our concealed author inserts reading upwards the anagram **I AM FRA[NCIS] BACON**:

Con. O be remou'd from him, and answere well.

Aust. Doe so king *Philip*, hang no more in doubt.
Bast. Hang nothing but a Calues skin most sweet lout.
Fra. **I am** perplext, and know not what to say.²³

I AM FRA[NCIS] BACON

In Act 1 Scene I the royal bastard Sir Philip Faulconbridge delivers a soliloquy in which he muses on the reality of the world which now awaits him:

But this is worshipful **soci**ety,
And fits the mounting spirit like myself;
For he is but a bastard to the time²⁴

In the passage Bacon incorporates one of his secret signatures in the first letters of the first three lines. The first line containing the phrase ‘Worshipful Society’ (an allusion to the Worshipful Society of Freemasons) begins with the letter **B**, the second with the letters **AN** and the third line with the letters **FO**. The rearranged spell out **F B A O N** which is clearly only lacking the letter **C** for **F B A C O N**. We do not however need to look too hard for the missing **C**. If we return to the first line the **C** needed to complete the anagram is the third letter in the final word ‘society’ giving us **F B A C O N**; and moreover, the letter **C** represents 100 in Roman numerals which is simple cipher for Francis Bacon.

In *The Taming of the Shrew* our supreme concealed poet and dramatist inserts two anagrams **F B A C O N** and **B A C O N** as follows:

For I am he am borne to tame you *Kate*,
And **b**ring you from a wilde *Kate* to a *Kate*
Conformable as other household *Kates*.²⁵

F B A C O N.

Be patient, tomorrow’t shalbe mended,
And for this night we’l fast for companie.
Come, I wil bring thee to thy Bridall chamber.²⁶

B A C O N.

The early Roman tragedy *Titus Andronicus* with its complex Baconian legal themes and the complicated distinctions around private and public revenge the subject of his essay *Of Revenge* includes a similar anagram of **B A C O N**:

Coming and going with thy hony breath.
But sure some *Tereus* hath defloured thee,
And lest thou should’st detect them, cut thy tongue.²⁷

B A C O N.

The involved and transcendent comedy *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* with its immortal line (‘Lord, what fools these mortals be!’) widely believed to have been written for an aristocratic wedding also incorporates an anagram of **B A C O N**:

By their increase, now knowes not which is which;
And this same progeny of euills,
Comes from our debate, from our dissension,²⁸

BACON.

Over Christmas 1594-5 Bacon organised and directed the magnificent Christmas Gray's Inn Revels that premiered his Shakespeare legal play *The Comedy of Errors*. On the Grand Night of 20 December 1594 'a great Presence of Lords, Ladies, and worshipful Personages' gathered for its performance in the Hall to see the premier of the play with its themes of errors and confusions later greatly expanded upon by Bacon in *The Advancement of Learning*. In the opening scene Bacon leaves his secret signature in the way of the following anagram of **FRAN [CIS] BACON**:

Fiue Sommers haue I spent in farthest *Greece*,
Roming cleane through the bounds of *Asia*,
And coasting homeward, came to *Ephesus*,
Hopelesse to finde, yet loth to leaue vnsought
Or that, or any place that harbours men:
But heere must end the story of my life,
And happy were I in my timelie death,
Could all my trauellis warrant me they liue.²⁹

He also secretly inserts in the last scene of the play the following anagram **BACON** or if you will **BY BACON**:

Mar. **B**y this I thinke the Diall point's at fiue:
Anon, I'me sure the Duke himselfe in person
Comes this way to the melancholly vale;³⁰

Just for good measure Bacon also adds the following passage:

Thirtie-three yeares haue I but gone to trauaile
Of you my sonnes, and till this present houre
My heaue burthen are deliuered.³¹

The number 33 is Bacon in simple cipher.

During the late 1580s and early 1590s Bacon began writing the War of the Roses plays *I Henry VI*, *2 Henry VI*, *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*, otherwise known as the first Shakespeare tetralogy. In the First Folio in the fifth Act of *I Henry VI* he inserts a triple anagram in a single passage:

Into two parties, is now **con**ioyn'd in one,
And meanes to giue you **ba**tzell presently.
Char. Somewhat too sodaine Sirs, the warning is,
But we will presently prouide for them.
Bur. I trust the Ghost of *Talbot* is not there:
Now he is gone my Lord, you neede not feare.
Pucel. Of all **ba**se passions, Feare is most accurst.
Command the **Con**quest *Charles*, it shall be thine.³²

BACON. BACON. BACON.

Shortly after in the fifth Act appears another Baconian anagram:

Puc. **C**hang'd to a worser shape thou canst not be:
Yor. **O**h, *Charles* the Dolphin is a proper man,
No shape but this can please your dainty eye.
Puc. A plaguing mischeefe light on *Charles*, and thee,
And may ye be both be sodainly surpiz'd
By bloody hands, in sleeping on your beds.
Yorke. **F**ell banning Hagge, Inchantresse hold thy
tongue.³³

F BACON.

Again in the fourth Act of *2 Henry VI* Bacon incorporates the following anagram:

Lieu. **F**irst let my words stab him, as he hath me.
Suf. **B**ase slaue, they words are blunt, and so art thou.
Lieu. **C**onuey him hence, and on our long boats side³⁴

F BACON.

In *Richard II* he also incorporates the simply astonishing anagram **BY ONE BACON**:

By this time (had the king permitted vs)
One of our soules had wandred in the ayre,
Banish'd this fraile sepulchre of our flesh,
As now our flesh is banish'd from this Land.
Confesse thy Treasons ere thou flye this Realme,³⁵

BY ONE BACON.

In the First Folio in Act I Scene 1 of *The First Part of King Henry the Fourth* he secretly signs it with the acrostic **F BACO** and the anagram **F BACON**:

And for this cause a-while we must neglect
Our holy purpose to Ierusalem.
Cosin, on Wednesday next, our Councell we will hold
At Windsor, and so informe the Lords:
But come your selfe with speed to vs againe,
For more is to be said, and to be done,³⁶

F BACON.

Two further anagrams of **F BACON** appear in *Much Ado About Nothing*:

doe you any em-
bassage to the Pigmies, rather then hould three words
conference, with this Harpy: you haue no employment
for me?³⁷

F BACON.

Bor. Mas and my elbow itcht, I thought there would
a scabbe follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answere for that, and now
forward with thy tale.³⁸

F BACON.

Moving from the Shakespeare English history plays to his classical Roman history tragedy *The Life and death of Julius Caesar* our supreme philosopher-poet adroitly inserts several of his secret signatures in the form of the anagrams **BACON** and **F BACON**:

Mur. **B**ut what trade art thou? Answer me directly.

Cob. **A** Trade Sir, that I hope I may vse, with a safe
Conscience, which is indeed Sir, a Mender of bad soules.³⁹

BACON.

Nor ayre-less Dungeon, nor strong Linkes of Iron,
Can be retentiuē to the strength of spirit:
But Life, being wearie of these worldly Barres,⁴⁰

BACON.

But for supporting robbers, shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes,
And sell the mighty space of our large honours
For so much trash as may be grasped thus?⁴¹

F BACON.

The incomparable tragedy of *Hamlet* whose central figure is disguised dramatic portrait of its concealed author also inserts an anagram of **F BACON**:

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy;
But not expressed in fancie; rich, not gawdie;
For the Apparell oft proclaimes the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station,⁴²

F BACON.

The complex Shakespeare play *Measure for Measure* has at its heart the God-like Rosicrucian figure of Duke Vincentio one akin to Prospero in *The Tempest*. He is seen by many Shakespeare scholars as a surrogate of the poet-dramatist himself made in his own image. Or put another way the secretive, complex and enigmatic character of Duke Vincentio, who adopts multiple masks, disguises and identities in *Measure for Measure* represents Shakespeare, that is to say the true author of the play Bacon, who outside of the play, also adopts multiple identities and disguises behind his living masks, including the pseudonym of Shakespeare. Marked by our concealed author with his anagram **F BACON**:

(As I subscribe not that, nor any other,
But in the losse of question) that you, his Sister,
Finding your selfe desir'd of such a person,
Whose creadit with the Iudge, or owne great place,
Could fetch your Brother from the Manacles
Of the all-binding-Law: and that there were
No earthly meane to saue him, but that either⁴³

F BACON.

The Tragedy of Othello (written in 1604) first appeared in print in a Quarto edition in 1622 with another version of *Othello* appearing the next year in the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio. Astonishingly a comparative examination of the 1622 Quarto edition and the version of *Othello* in the First Folio reveals that the latter is 160 lines longer and differs in wording in more than a thousand instances. Of course, the secret author of *Othello* was still very much alive in 1622 and 1623, which surely to any rational person is of some critical importance, whose mortality is conveniently evidenced in the hidden anagram of his name **BACON**:

Comfort forswear me. Vnkindnesse may do much,
And his vnkindnesse may defeat my life,
But neuer taynt my Loue.⁴⁴

BACON.

The *True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three Daughters* first appeared in a Quarto edition in 1608 and just over a decade later in one of the falsely dated Pavier/William Jaggard Quarto editions in 1619. A third version of *King Lear* appeared in the 1623 First Folio which was subjected to substantial revision, cutting some 300 lines from the first Quarto and adding around a hundred new lines to the Folio version, with several speeches differently assigned, as well as numerous variations in language and wording. Our sublime dramatist also inserted his secret signatures here in the form of two anagrams of **BACON**:

Glou. Come hither fellow.
Edg. And yet I must:
Blesse thy sweete eyes, they bleede.⁴⁵

BACON.

Or ere Ile weepe: O Foole, I shall go mad.
Corn. Let vs withdraw, 'twill be a Storme.
Reg. This house is little, the old man an'ds people,
Cannot be well bestow'd.
Gon. 'Tis his owne blame hath put himselfe from rest,
And must needs taste his folly.
Reg. For his particular, Ile receiue him gladly,
But not one follower.⁴⁶

BACON.

The other great tragedy *Macbeth* (written in 1606) was first printed in the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio with the following hidden anagram of **BACON** secretly inserted into its text:

Conduct me to mine Host we loue him highly,
And shall continue, our Graces towards him.
By your leaue Hostesse.⁴⁷

BACON.

The Roman history play *Coriolanus* (first written around 1608) was first printed in the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio and is also adorned with an anagram of **BACON**:

Coniecturall Marriages, making parties strong,
And feebling such as stand not in their liking,
Below their cobled Shooes.⁴⁸

BACON.

The late play *The Winter's Tale* (written c. 1609-10) which explored the political process of the union of England and Scotland reflected in a series of speeches and treatises written by Bacon in the years leading up to its composition was first printed in the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio with the following **BACO** acrostic and anagram of **BACON**:

By my regard, but kill'd none so. *Camillo*,
As you are certainly a Gentleman, thereto
Clerke-like experience'd, which no lesse adorne
Our Gentry, than our parents Noble Names,
In whose succeſſe we are gentle.⁴⁹

BACO and **BACON.**

In *Cymbeline, King of Britain* first printed in the 1623 First Folio placed at the last of the tragedies the final drama in the volume Bacon conceals and reveals himself several times in one line in Act 2 Scene 5 where Posthumus refers to the false boast of Giacomo:

This yellow *Iachimo* in an houre, was't not?
Or lesse; at first? Perchance he spoke not, but
Like a full **Acorn**'d **Boare**, a Iarman on,
Cry'de oh, and mounted; found no opposition⁵⁰

The above is a very condensed and involved allusion to its author, Bacon. The name Bacon is of Germanic ('Iarman') origin, a boar is a wild pig from which bacon is derived, and for good measure 'acorn' phonetically sounds like Bacon, and with the initial letter from the next word 'boar' it yields the anagram, **BACON**, and when we add the letter 'f' from the word 'full', the anagram **F BACON**.

The date when *Timon of Athens* whose eponymous character is a disguised dramatic portrait of Bacon was written and revised is uncertain. Some aspects of the play reflect circumstances and themes beyond Bacon's fall in 1621. The play was first entered into the Stationers' Register in 1623 and printed for the first time in the First Folio with the anagram **F BACON**:

For each true word, a blister, and each false
Be as Cantherizing to the root of o'th' Tongue,
Consuming it with speaking.

I Worthy *Timon*.
Tim. Of none but such as you,
And you of *Timon*.⁵¹

F BACON.

Francis Bacon-Shakespeare was undoubtedly the greatest poet and dramatist of his age, of all time, who possessed a profound grasp of ciphers, codes, rebuses, emblems, symbolic head and tailpieces, and all other cryptic devices, and undoubtedly the greatest authorial anagrammatist, evidence of which is repeatedly and continually found throughout the First Folio revealing and confirming that Bacon is Shakespeare.

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2. Alastair Fowler, *Literary Names Personal Names in English Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 87.
3. R. H. Winnick, "'Loe, here in one line is his name writ twice": Anagrams, Shakespeare's Sonnets, and the Identity of the Fair Friend', *Literary Imagination*, 11 (2009), pp. 254-77. I have used the unnumbered online article so for the convenience of the reader I will give its specific or closest reference number in the paper, n. 6.
4. Helen Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 32.
5. R. H. Winnick, "'Loe, here in one line is his name writ twice": Anagrams, Shakespeare's Sonnets, and the Identity of the Fair Friend', *Literary Imagination*, 11 (2009), n. 8.
6. *Ibid.*, n. 9.
7. R. H. Winnick, "'Loe, here in one line is his name writ twice": Anagrams, Shakespeare's Sonnets, and the Identity of the Fair Friend', *Literary Imagination*, 11 (2009), n. 39.
8. *Ibid.*, n. 9.
9. *Ibid.*, n. 29.
10. *Ibid.*, n. 33.
11. *Ibid.*, n. 34.
12. *Ibid.*, n. 47.
13. Andrew Sofer 'All's I-L-L That Starts "I'Le": Acrostic Space and Ludic Reading in the Margins of the Early Modern Play-Text', *Renaissance Drama*, 48 (2020), I have used the unnumbered online article so for the convenience of the reader I will give its specific or closest reference number in the paper, n. 22. In *Literary Names Personal Names in English Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 77, 235 Professor Fowler provides definitions of an acrostic and an anagram:

Acrostic: a device whereby the letters of a name or other words are dispersed

according to a regular pattern, often as the first letters of successive verses

(INITIAL ACROSTIC). Other options include the last letters (TELESTICH), first

and last letters (DOUBLE ACROSTIC), the first letters after caesuras (MEDIAL ACROSTIC), etc. Acrostics may be thought of as special instances of DISPERSED ANAGRAM: like the anagram, an acrostic may be open-displayed typographically- or hidden.

Authorship might also be affirmed through an acrostic...

In the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, acrostics were so common that educated readers seem to have traced them almost at sight. Writers such as Francois Villon (1431-after 1463), Francesco Colonna (1433/4-1527), and Palingenius (Pier Angelo Manzolia) (c.1500-c.1543) still signed their works acrostically. A prominent English example is John Gower, who gives his acrostic signature in a prologue to book I of *Vox Clamantis*.

Anagram: words within words. A device whereby the letters or syllables of a word or phrase are rearranged or else dispersed within a larger text. Used to link a name with satiric or eulogistic comment on it (e.g. MARGARET THATCHER: THAT GREAT CHAMBER). Sometimes combined with ACROSTIC or REBUS.

Anagrams may be CONDENSED (rearranged within a short text or DISPERSED among other letters). Anagrams may be openly displayed or concealed (as when embedded in a longer text).

14. Andrew Sofer 'All's I-L-L That Starts "I'Le": Acrostic Space and Ludic Reading in the Margins of the Early Modern Play-Text', *Renaissance Drama*, 48 (2020), ns. 46 & 51.

15. *Ibid.*, n. 65.

16. *Ibid.*, n. 67

17. *Ibid.*, n. 69.

18. William Bellamy, *Shakespeare's Verbal Art* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2015), p. 1.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

20. Alastair Fowler, *Literary Names Personal Names in English Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 82.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

23. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Histories, p. 10; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), p. 165. Yann Le Merlus, 'Allisnum2er', 'Happy Birthday to Shakespeare's First Folio', 8 November 2021, at

<https://sirbacon.org/all-is-num2er/> For a discussion see A Phoenix, 'Francis Bacon And The Law In His Early Shakespeare Plays Reflected In His Life And Acknowledged Writings', (2021), pp. 32-48.

24. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Histories, p. 2.

25. *Ibid.*, Comedies, p. 217.

26. *Ibid.*, Comedies, p. 222. For a discussion of this play See A. Phoenix, 'An Unrecognised Francis Bacon Manuscript Written In The Hand Of The Bacon Family Scribe Petruccio In *The Taming Of The Shrew*, Whose Father In The Play Is Antonio, And Where Two Of His Household Servants Are Named Nicholas And Nathaniel, The Christian Names Of Anthony, Nicholas and Nathaniel Bacon', pp. 1-48.

27. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 39. For an exploration of its legal themes see A Phoenix, 'Francis Bacon And The Law In His Early Shakespeare Plays Reflected In His Life And Acknowledged Writings', (2021), pp. 26-31.

28. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Comedies, p. 149.

29. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Comedies, p. 88; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), p. 100.

30. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Comedies, p. 97; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), p. 102.

31. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Comedies, p. 100.

32. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Histories, p. 115; Rob Fowler 'Light of Truth' and Yann Le Merlus 'Allisnum2er', 'Baconian Acrostics, Anagrams, Monograms, & Secret Signatures, in the Shakespeare Poems and Plays', B' Hive, 24 April 2022, at <https://sirbacon.org/bacon-forum/index.php?/topic/150-baconian-acrostics-anagrams-monograms-secret-signatures-in-the-shakespeare-poems-plays/page/6/#comment-7936> For its Baconian legal themes see A Phoenix, 'Francis Bacon And The Law In His Early Shakespeare Plays Reflected In His Life And Acknowledged Writings', (2021), pp. 9-11.

33. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Histories, p. 115; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), p. 196.

34. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Histories, p. 137; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), p. 202. For its Baconian legal themes see A Phoenix, 'Francis Bacon And The Law In His Early Shakespeare Plays Reflected In His Life And Acknowledged Writings', (2021), pp. 11-17.

35. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Histories, p. 27; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), pp. 170, 176. For its Baconian legal themes see A Phoenix, 'Francis Bacon And The Law In His Early Shakespeare Plays Reflected In His Life And Acknowledged Writings', (2021), pp. 47-55.
36. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Histories, p. 49; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), p. 179.
37. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Ed. Blount, 1623), Comedies, p. 106.
38. *Ibid.*, Comedies, p. 112.
39. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 109; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), p. 242.
40. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 113; Kenneth R. Patton, *Setting The Record Straight: An Expose of Stratfordian Anti-Baconian Tactics The Vindication Of William Stone Booth. A Detailed Critical Analysis of Chapter IX: The String Cipher of William Stone Booth In Elizebeth S. and William F. Friedman's The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined* (San Diego, California: 2000), p. 64.
41. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 124; Kenneth R. Patton, *Setting The Record Straight: An Expose of Stratfordian Anti-Baconian Tactics The Vindication Of William Stone Booth. A Detailed Critical Analysis of Chapter IX: The String Cipher of William Stone Booth In Elizebeth S. and William F. Friedman's The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined* (San Diego, California: 2000), p. 64.
42. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 156. See A. Phoenix, 'Francis Bacon And His Earliest Shakespeare Play *Hamlet* A Tudor Family Tragedy', (2021), pp. 1-109.
43. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Comedies, p 69; Edward D. Johnson, *Shakespearian Acrostics* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers Ltd, 1942), p. 22. For the play see A. Phoenix, 'Francis Bacon, The God-Like Rosicrucian Figure Of Duke Vincentio, And The Unpublished Speeches Of Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon, In *Measure For Measure*, (2021), pp. 1-48.
44. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 332; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), p. 264.
45. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 301;

Edward D. Johnson, *Shakespearian Acrostics* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers Ltd, 1942), p. 65.

46. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 295; William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925), p. 259.

47. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 135.

48. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 2.

49. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), p. 281.

50. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623), pp. 389-90.

51. *Shakespeares Comedies Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Ed. Blount, 1623), Tragedies, p. 96. For more Baconian-Shakespearean acrostics, anagrams and secret signatures see both Yann Le Merlus, 'Allisnum2er' and Rob Fowler, 'Light of Truth' in 'Baconian Acrostics, Anagrams, Monograms, & Secret Signatures in the Shakespeare Poems & Plays', 'Special Bacon-Shakespeare Title Pages & Emblems', 'The Baconian-Rosicrucian AA Headpieces in Editions of Shakespeare Poems, Quartos & Folios', on B'Hive <https://sirbacon.org/bacon-forum/index.php?/topic/93-the-baconian-rosicrucian-aa-headpieces-in-editions-of-shakespeare-poems-quartos-folios/page/9/#comment-7095> and for a collection of his groundbreaking videos see also Yann Le Merlus, 'Allisnum2er', at <https://sirbacon.org/all-is-num2er/>